

*Imagine one million hawks passing in one week...*

**Hawk Mountain and Pronatura-Veracruz  
Invite You to Join the  
*2026 River of Raptors  
Hawk-Watching Excursion***

**September 27<sup>th</sup> to October 5<sup>th</sup>  
*7 days in central Veracruz  
from coast to high-elevation pine forest***

***Cost:* \$4400 plus airfare in double occupancy**

***Leaders:* Laurie Goodrich, Ph.D.**

**Hawk Mt. Director of Conservation Science  
*and* Kashmir Wolf, Pronatura Monitoring Director**



***Join us for the hawk-watching experience of a lifetime! We plan to visit at the  
peak of the migration, when daily counts may number 200,000 raptors  
including Broad-winged and Swainson's Hawks.***

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**Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, PA, and Pronatura-Veracruz, MX,  
Invite You to Join them for the 2026 *River of Raptors*  
Hawk-Watching and Birding Trip of a lifetime, Sept 27 to Oct. 5**

Each fall season an average of *four and a half million hawks* of 30 species are recorded from two count sites in central Veracruz, Mexico, including greater than two million Broad-winged Hawks. They squeeze into a 15-mile-wide bottleneck between the mountains and the Gulf of Mexico – along with mind-boggling numbers of other migrants: Wood Storks, Anhingas, White Pelicans, Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, etc. Counts in recent years have confirmed that Veracruz is host to the most concentrated raptor migration in the world and receives over 90% of the population of Swainson's and Broad-winged hawks, and Mississippi Kites.

From Hawk Mountain's Senior Biologist Laurie Goodrich's journal:

*The hawks swirl off of the hills in the mid-morning heat rising into small streams then merging into rivers, spiraling overhead. On every horizon kettles are forming, merging together into rivers of raptors. There are birds everywhere with layers of kettles swirling in different directions overhead-- Turkey Vultures and Swainson's below and Broadwings above--an incredible sight! Everyone is in awe. Excitement is tangible."*

**Hawk Mountain helped initiate the *Veracruz River of Raptors* Project in 1991 in collaboration with HawkWatch International and Mexican conservationists.**

Through their efforts, the site has grown into a world-renown monitoring, education, and conservation initiative. The work has been led by Pronatura-Veracruz for more than 20 years and in 2006 they opened the first-ever bird observatory-nature center in eastern Mexico. Hawk-watching takes place from chairs atop roof of observatory and hotel, with cooler of drinks nearby.



Participant numbers are limited to 12 to ensure a quality experience for

everyone. Participants will observe the world-renowned raptor and wading bird migration, view Mexican specialties and wintering birds, and have special introductions to Pronatura's on-the ground conservation efforts in central Veracruz.



In addition to hawk-watching, the Hawk Mountain tour group will explore local habitats for some of the many species of birds to be found in central Veracruz. We will visit some pre-Colombian sites and a world-renown museum of anthropology. Several raptor species such as Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, Laughing and Aplomado Falcons (see left), may be seen as well as other spectacular birds, such as Double-striped Thick-Knee, Vermillion Flycatcher, Blue-crowned Motmot,

Squirrel Cuckoo, Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, and possibly Blue Mockingbird. The butterflies in Veracruz are as exciting as the birds. Leaders will have bird and butterfly guides along for all the forays.

### **VRR Trip Dates: September 27 to October 5, 2026**

#### **Costs: \$4300 includes:**

- ① All ground transportation airport to airport with an experienced driver
- ① Expert local, bilingual guide
- ① Expert North American guide
- ① All admission fees
- ① All meals in Mexico (wine/beer are extra)
- ① Lodging in comfortable rooms, double occupancy
- ① Instruction in hawk identification
- ① Snacks and purified water daily
- ① A contribution to Pronatura Veracruz's raptor conservation programs
- ① Supplement for a single room is extra (\$300)
- ① **Tips to Mexican guide and driver are encouraged and are extra**
- ① airfare to Veracruz airport is not included

**Airfare is not included.** The round-trip airfare to Veracruz will vary with city of origin and airfares have increased recently. We recommend you plan at least 2 hour layover in Houston or whatever connecting city you choose. Try to avoid Mexico City if you can. Regardless, contact Laurie to find out what is recommended. Make sure your flights are refundable. **We strongly urge you purchase trip insurance to cover unrecoverable costs in case of illness or need**

**to cancel. Be sure to get insurance that covers 'any reason'.**

**Deposits/Payment:** Trip is limited to 8-12 adult participants on a first-come, first serve basis. If less than six participants sign-up, we may merge our trip with another or cancel. To hold a slot on the trip register through Hawk Mountain or call/email Dr. Laurie Goodrich at 570-943-3411 x 106, ([goodrich@hawkmountain.org](mailto:goodrich@hawkmountain.org)) and submit a \$500 deposit by **June 1, 2026**. Balance of payment is due **August 15, 2026**. The refund policy is attached.



### **Trip Philosophy:**

The *Veracruz Hawk-Watching Excursion* is designed for the hawk-watcher/conservationist/bird-watcher. We have designed the trip to provide maximum opportunities to view the spectacle of the migration, to benefit local raptor conservation efforts and to gain an appreciation for the culture of

central Mexico away from the tourist destinations. We will stay in the local community to ensure our dollars support the local people and allow the participants to experience Mexican culture first-hand. Flexibility and good humor are required to make the tour a successful adventure for each participant.

It is important to recognize that Mexican small-town hotels and restaurants may not all be on par with U.S. AAA standards. However, they hold a unique charm and atmosphere that you will find enchanting. We will ensure that tour participants are given clean, safe rooms with fans or air-conditioning and treated to excellent, healthy local fare. Facilities are informal and friendly. Previous tour groups have said they enjoyed being away from the normal tourist routine and long to return.



The trip schedule is very full, but participants are encouraged to take a morning or afternoon off from the group and rest or relax on their own to make the trip at your own pace. Cardel and Xalapa are safe for exploration.

**Tour Leaders:**

**Laurie Goodrich,** Ph.D., Director of Long-term Monitoring at Hawk Mountain, is one of the co-founders of the Veracruz River of Raptors project and a project scientific advisor. She has led trips to the region since 1994 and never tires of watching the migration. She received her Master's in Ecology from Rutgers University and Ph.D. from Penn State University. She currently serves as Director of Conservation Science for Hawk Mountain.



Here she is shown in Mexico aside **Kashmir Wolf**, Veracruz Monitoring Director and Hawk Mountain Tour Guide for 2026. (A former intern, Ariana, is also shown.)

Trip logistics will be coordinated by Pronatura Veracruz and Kashmir in cooperation with Laurie Goodrich. Proceeds from trip benefit Pronatura's raptor monitoring and conservation programs. Your trip helps Pronatura continue this long-term monitoring effort.

Because of Hawk Mountain's close relationship with Pronatura, other Pronatura staff may join the group periodically and special programs are possible. We will hope to have River of Raptors founder and Hawk Mountain Board member, Ernesto Ruelas Inzunza, Ph.D., join for at least one day!



## **VERACRUZ TRIP 2026 ITINERARY**

*The Itinerary is tentative at this point but will cover these stops. It may be re-arranged depending on weather and hawk-watching opportunities. The schedule is very full, but participants are encouraged to take a morning or afternoon off to recharge and rest as needed.*

### **September 27— Travel Day/Hotel Mocambo Veracruz overnight.**

Fly to Veracruz City via Houston. Meet guides and group in Houston and arrive at Veracruz City Airport to travel by van to a hotel for an overnight at hotel along the Gulf of Mexico.

### **September 28, Hotel Bienvenidos, Cardel**

Early morning bird walk and visit to Gulf of Mexico beach followed by sumptuous breakfast. Look for Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, gulls, terns, seabirds, and migrating songbirds along the beach and in hotel gardens. Travel to Cardel and arrive at Hotel Bienvenidos, check-in and visit roof-top hawkwatch for afternoon flights. Late afternoon visit to Zempoala ruins, a pre-Colombian settlement of the Totanac culture. Dinner in local restaurant.



### **September 29, Hotel Bienvenidos, Cardel.**

Birding at Villa Rica Lagoon and visit Miramar-ecopark a new observation site to enjoy the river of raptors from close, picnic lunch at Miramar. Return to Cardel to rest or Hawkwatching on roof before moving few miles to Visit Hernan Cortez's first house, then take evening boat ride on La Antigua river out to the Gulf to spot kingfishers, shorebirds, terns, pelicans, followed by dinner in the favorite open air seafood restaurant in town.

### **September 30, Hotel Casabella in Coatepec**

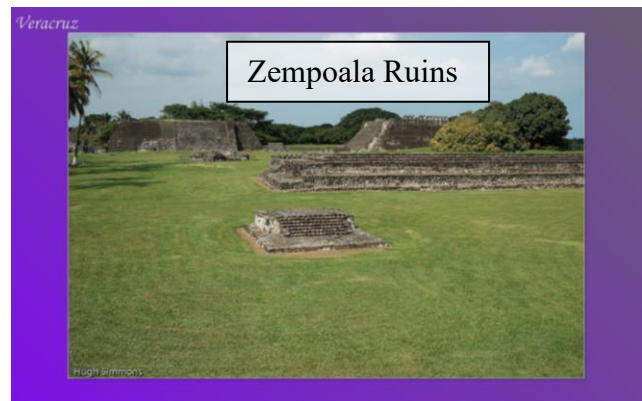
We will visit Juan Angel beach, looking for the endemic Mexican Sheartail while we have the views of other birds, such Squirrel Cuckoo, Rufous-nape Wren, and Yellow breasted Chats and other migrants. On the river mouth we will be looking for shore and wading birds and Aplomado Falcons. Return to Cardel for lunch, then we will pack and visit Chichicaxtle to get more of the raptor migration before moving to the highlands of Veracruz, where we will be staying for a couple days. Arrival at Casabella in the town of Coatepec, well known for its world class coffee.

**October 1st, Hotel Casabella in Coatepec.**

Early morning bird walk in Macuiltepetl Ecological Park, a preserved forest located on an ancient extinct volcano in center Xalapa city. We will seek out the many resident and endemic species that may be found here including the Blue Mockingbird, Blue-capped Motmot, Bearded Wood-Partridge and Green Jays. A lunch in town and travel to world-renown Anthropology Museum of Xalapa to view the excellent Olmec exhibits. Return to Coatepec for resting or to walk around town. Dinner at local restaurant.

**October 2nd, Hotel Puentas, Antigua.**

An early breakfast and morning birding trip to high elevation pine-woodland forest to look for Red Warbler, Russet Nightingale Thrush, White-eared Hummingbird and other mountain birds. Lunch at Perote then travel east for late day hawk flight at Chichicaxtle. Check into Hotel Puente Nacional and enjoy a relaxed evening dinner.

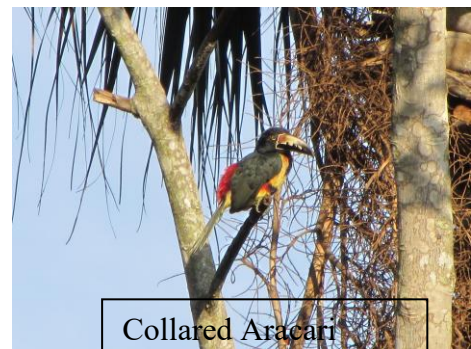


Double-striped  
Thickknee

**October 3rd, Hotel Puentas, Antigua.**

Early morning birding at El Mirador, a shade coffee plantation with a mature forest. Many forest specialties like Ivory-billed Woodcreeper, Tropical Parula, Gartered Trogon and more are possible; Lunch at local restaurant. Return for hawk-watching at Chichicaxtle then travel south to Veracruz City for the evening. Dinner at Fiesta Inn Hotel.

**October 4th, Hotel Mocambo.** Pack up and leave early to Las Barrancas grasslands and Alvarado wetlands south of Veracruz. Look for Double-striped Thick Knees, Yellow-headed Vulture, Snail Kite, Limpkin, American Bittern, and other marsh birds and fork-tailed flycatcher. Return late afternoon, wash up and visit the Zocalo in downtown Veracruz City for nightlife and dinner, last minute shopping.



**October 5th. Airport.** Head out to airport for flights home. Say goodbye to new friends!

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## **Veracruz Fall Migration Anual Averages**

|                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Turkey Vulture       | 1,749,646        |
| Osprey               | 2616             |
| Bald Eagle           | 1                |
| Swallow-tailed Kite  | 247              |
| Mississippi Kite     | 161122           |
| Hook-billed Kite     | 151              |
| White-tailed Kite    | 2                |
| Northern Harrier     | 433              |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk   | 3492             |
| Cooper's Hawk        | 2150             |
| Northern Goshawk     | 1                |
| Zone-tailed Hawk     | 156              |
| Red-shouldered Hawk  | 11               |
| Red-tailed Hawk      | 196              |
| Roadside Hawk        | 1                |
| Broad-winged Hawk    | 1,700,415        |
| Swainson's Hawk      | 733,529          |
| Harris Hawk          | 5                |
| Common Black Hawk    | 5                |
| Gray Hawk            | 606              |
| White-tailed Hawk    | 2                |
| American Kestrel     | 6443             |
| Merlin               | 144              |
| Peregrine Falcon     | 648              |
| Ferruginous Hawk     | 2                |
| Golden Eagle         | 1                |
| <b>TOTAL RAPTORS</b> | <b>4,504,302</b> |



Laughing Falcon  
by Julio Gallardo



© Shawn P. Carey

Other migrants enjoyed included White Pelicans, Wood Storks, Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, White-winged Doves, White-faced Ibis, Anhingas, etc.



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**2026 Hawk Mountain Veracruz  
Hawk-Watching Excursion  
Reservation Form**

**Yes! Sign me up for a place on the 2026 excursion to view the River of Raptors in Veracruz, Mexico. Enclosed is my \$500 deposit for trip due by June 1, 2026 with final payments by August 1, 2026. I have signed and attached the participant release form and I enclose it herein.**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
(write full name found on passport, and nickname if you use one.)

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Phone Number** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Deposits can be made with check (to Hawk Mountain Sanctuary) or credit card:**

**Visa or Master Card number:** \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_. **Exp. Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Send Reservation Form and payment to:**

**L. Goodrich, Trip Coordinator  
Veracruz Hawk-Watching Excursion  
Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association  
410 Summer Valley Road  
Orwigsburg, PA 17961**

**Passports must be updated so do not expire within 6 months of visit. Begin work on this if needed!**

**Questions may be directed to Laurie Goodrich at: 570-943-3411 x 106, or at [goodrich@hawkmtn.org](mailto:goodrich@hawkmtn.org)**

## **Hawk Mountain Ecotour 2026**

### **Travel Insurance and Cancellation Policy**

#### **Travel Insurance:**

We recommend each participant to purchase travel insurance which includes cancel for any reason ("CFAR") travel coverage. Any unrecoverable costs that are not covered by travel insurance remain the responsibility of the participant. Information on trip insurance can be obtained from a travel agent or from your own insurance agent.

**Cancellation Policy:** If a participant must cancel their reservation for this trip, the participant must provide a written cancellation statement to Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association. The refund schedule is as follows:

- More than 60 days before departure: Refund of deposit and payment, less a \$50 handling fee.
- Between 45 to 60 days before departure: Refund of deposit and payment, less a \$100 handling fee and all unrecoverable costs, including but not limited to, reservation fees paid for transportation and leader expenses.

After 45 days before the trip: Reservations are subject to a 100% cancellation charge depending on recoverable costs, including but not limited to, reservation fees paid for transportation and leader expenses.

#### **Responsibility:**

For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the birding trip, each tour participant agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association, its agents, trip leaders, employees, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release Agreement attached.

Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motor coach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles, or for any reasons whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour.

Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association accepts no responsibility for losses, or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, war, quarantine, or other causes. The birding trip participants shall bear all such losses and expenses. Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association reserves the right to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary. Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association reserves the right to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at the owner's risk entirely.

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Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking the birding trip. Some walking expected on trails of various types of tread. If you have questions regarding the physical requirements, contact Dr L. Goodrich at Hawk Mountain. Each participant is responsible for bringing the appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in post-reservation materials. Good foot wear is required, such as hiking shoes , sturdy sneakers or boots that are no more than three years old.

The receipt of your tour deposit shall be deemed to be your consent to the above conditions. Each participant also shall sign and deliver the release and indemnity agreement at the time of registration.

### **Hawk Mountain 2026 Birding trip to Veracruz ("The Program Activity") Participant Release and Indemnity Agreement**

I am willingly participating in a birding trip in the country of Mexico in October 2026, and I acknowledge that there are inherent dangers and risks that may occur with this expedition, known or unknown, relating but not limited to: travel in remote areas by means of aircraft, boat, automobile and other conveyances, without the means of rapid evacuation or medical facilities; nature walks or hikes, use of camera and birding equipment, accidents and/or illness, and acts of nature, man, or God.

I recognize and agree that I am taking part in this trip at my own risk. I acknowledge that Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association makes no warranty or representation, express or implied, regarding the conditions that may be encountered during the trip, and/or the safety of any means of transportation during the trip, and that Hawk Mountain will have no liability for any defect in or dangerous conditions pertaining thereto.

I also am aware of the highly contagious nature of the novel Coronavirus/COVID-19 (the "Disease") and the risk that myself and other persons may be exposed to or contract the Disease by participation in the Program Activity. Further, I am aware that attending the Program Activity could increase my risk of contracting the Disease. I also understand and acknowledge that such exposure or infection may result in illness, personal injury, permanent disability, death, or property damages to myself or other persons. I acknowledge that this risk may result or be compounded by the actions, omissions, or negligence of myself or others, including but not limited to, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Program Activity employees, volunteers, Third-Party Entities associated with the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary as part of the Program Activity, and Program Activity participants and their families. Notwithstanding the risks associated

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with the Disease, I acknowledge that I am voluntarily choosing to participate in the Program Activity.

I understand that while the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and Pronatura Veracruz has implemented preventative measures to reduce the spread of the Disease, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary cannot guarantee that I will not become infected with the Disease because of participating in the Program Activity. I understand that no list of restrictions, guidelines, or practices will remove all of the risk of exposure to the Disease while my I participate in the Program Activity.

I further certify that I am in good health and able to and have taken any precautions recommended by my physician or trip leaders.

In consideration of the right to participate in this expedition, I hereby release Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association, Pronatura Veracruz, and their agents, their trip leaders, associates, related parties, directors, and staff, from all responsibilities for damages, injuries, losses, or delays due to any reason whatsoever and hereby assume all risks and dangers in connection with this trip.

I have read the itinerary and related information pertaining to this trip and I am aware of the terms and conditions of the trip involving refunds and cancellations, responsibility and liability.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**Printed Name in Full:**\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**Printed Name in Full:**\_\_\_\_\_

(If a couple is registering, please have both sign the document)

Covid boosters and vaccinations are recommended but not required. Walking sticks recommended for people with knee or leg injuries.